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Working Bodies: Interactive Service Employment and Workplace Identities, By Linda McDowell, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 272 pp., ISBN 978-1-4051-5977-7 and ISBN 978-1-4051-5978-4

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representation of women and minorities. Taken as a whole though, the contributors do provide support for the idea that an effective union renewal strategy might use equity as a core part of its mission. As Foley and Forrest both note in their respective chapters, however, such a transformation sets a big agenda as it would tend to undermine long standing union practices, cultures, and traditions. More ideas about how to dismantle existing structures and implement change, if indeed this is possible, would have been welcome additions to the book.

My biggest fault with the book is that it lacked a concluding chapter. The book covered a variety of perspectives and views, and needed a strong wrap-up chapter to recap key points, integrate the message from the various contributors into a more coherent whole, help map a way forward, and draw our attention to signs of hope. Another fault of the book is that it failed to adequately draw distinctions between unions. As Linda Briskin signals in her chapter, some labour organizations have moved more than others toward an equity agenda, and these developments should have been articulated and noted in depth.

Recent evidence suggests the union movement in Canada is not in as rough shape as some of the contributors to this book suggest. There are signs of vibrancy and renewal in some labour quarters, and union membership actually increased slightly in 2010, to 30.9%, with full-time worker coverage increasing to 31.1% (Uppal, 2010). Still, there is overwhelming evidence that labour does need to change, and probably quite radically, if it is to survive and thrive. Foley and Baker's book offers one perspective on a way forward, and is worthy reading for those interested in how a revitalized union movement might be realized.

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Working Bodies: Interactive Service Employment and Workplace Identities

By Linda McDowell, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 272 pp., ISBN 978-1-4051-5977-7 and ISBN 978-1-4051-5978-4

Working Bodies provides a powerful argument concerning change and continuity in the "new" economy. McDowell explains that a steep decline in manufacturing jobs in the western world, coupled with the increase of service jobs, has created both elements of change and continuity in the "new" economy. The increase in female waged workers, the centrality of work in people's lives, and the rise of neoliberal employment policies are all elements of change. With increased participation rates, the author argues, as in the case of the commoditization of services; dual-income middle class families turn to low-waged workers to provide services such as child and elderly care and house cleaning. However, rather than being a new phenomenon, service work has become waged work instead of un-waged labour performed by (mostly female) family members, in the home.

The author focuses on service work concerned with servicing the bodily needs of others through interpersonal interactions with customers. Emotional and embodied attributes, class distinctions and gender divisions of labour become central to the analysis. The empirical increase of service work, it is argued, necessitate changes in theorizing. Thus, the author provides an overview of sociological and feminist theories of the body and sexuality, embodiment and identity, drawing attention to associations made with femininity and masculinity, and hierarchies of suitability. In addition, the author incorporates labour geography theory: since embodied work takes place in the co-presence of both provider and client, place-tied servicing work is a key part of understanding segmented labour markets.

Chapter two develops an argument regarding continuity versus change in the

"new" economy, makes the distinction between producer and consumer services, then describes the emerging social divide between "high-tech" and "high-touch" work. First, domestic work has been taken outside the home and onto the market, yet is still mostly done by women and is often low-status, reflecting continuity. Second, although about three quarters of jobs in Anglo-Saxon countries are in the service industries, income from the export of manufactured goods is more important, due to increases in productivity. Value from material things produced is much easier to assess; and productivity here is much easier to increase than in service work. Indeed, service work, where co-presence and emotional exchange are essential, is difficult to quantify and to render more "productive." Finally, the author uses the high-tech / high-touch work dichotomy to explain how an increase in high-tech workers (middle-class, educated, autonomous and mobile workers in knowledge occupations) has led to a corresponding increase in high touch workers (low-skill, precarious) to service their needs. Although women have increasing access to education and to high-tech positions, traditional patterns of gender segregation – such as a gender pay gap – still exist. Conversely, young working-class men, because of the drop in manufacturing sector opportunities, must enter service work – not typically associated with masculinity – and their inability to produce certain scripted behaviours makes it difficult for them.

Chapter 3 explores the theoretical concepts helpful in understanding interactive body work, such as emotional and embodied performance: employers and customers expect a certain appearance and behavior from service workers. These are often associated with youth, whiteness, slenderness and sociability, attributes also associated with femininity. Such workers must embody certain stereotypes to be seen as appropriate for certain jobs. Differences in class and ethnicity also play a role:

for example, migrants may have difficulties fulfilling certain requirements as they do not know the cultural scripts associated with gender in different workplaces.

The second part of the book is dedicated to empirical case studies and ethnographies of non-specialist high-touch work, on a local scale – the home. Chapter 4 deals with the commoditization of domestic and care work and asks: why has it increased, why is it still feminized and low waged? In most cases, domestic work is either unskilled, seen as beyond value, or as a labour of love. The difficulty in measuring such work, and increasing its productivity, are factors in its being poorly paid. In Chapter 5, McDowell tackles the world of sex work, where questions arise about employment as voluntary exchange of labour power for wages. The author explores different locations of sex work and the different relations that develop within. Finally, the author explores connections between skin colour, ethnicity, migration, travel and trafficking in the sex industry. Chapter 6 turns to conceptions of masculinity in some traditionally male jobs: boxers, doormen/bouncers and firefighters. The author highlights how physical strength is the main attribute of masculinity in working class occupations, in contrast to rationality and cerebral abilities in middle-class, knowledge-based occupations. She also elaborates a methodological critique of the labour market ethnographies usually used by men who study men and masculinity at work.

The third part of the book deals with specialist high-touch work, in the public arena. Chapter 7 turns to care, its associations with femininity and the paradoxes that arise for men in these occupations. McDowell examines the nature of nursing, commoditized caring labour valorized as a vocation but financially devalued. She draws a parallel between these and sex workers as many develop distancing mechanisms when dealing with uncomfortable aspects of the job – like those involving waste and odors. The author also examines the emotional labour expected

of nurses – such as reassuring patients and their families – as being too often attributed to ‘innate’ feminine traits and thus not financially rewarded. But even within this profession lies a class distinction – between high end positions that use technology and low end, high-touch jobs such as bathing patients. A gender distinction is added when the author turns to male nurses, who are often seen with more authority and benefit from assumptions about career development and leadership potential. When the author turns her attention to beauty parlours, she explains how women in these occupations emphasize professionalism while using their personalities to build and maintain relationships with clients.

In chapter 8, the author explores fast food and hotel workers to illustrate how gender and ethnicity intersect to create a suitability hierarchy for different positions. In fast food, the norms of masculinity for unskilled, working class young men are at odds with the behaviour expected in such occupations, putting them at a disadvantage. As for hotel workers, the focus shifts to ethnicity and how certain groups are associated with certain attributes, thus concentrating their presence in certain positions. The author then discusses the role of international employment agencies in the assembling of transnational labour forces and their racialized, gendered divisions.

One does not have to be an expert to understand McDowell’s arguments, as the case studies and ethnographies she describes illustrate them well and render them accessible. In addition, the theoretical constructs she calls upon are well explained and permeate the whole book. Although her focus is on the UK, the comparisons she makes to the US and elsewhere are useful and show how most processes she describes are not unique to a single country. Overall, the book is insightful and could be recommended to students and experts alike.

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Smiling Down the Line: Info-Service Work in the Global Economy

Par Bob Russell, Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 2009, 326 p., ISBN 978-1-4426-0981-5

Le secteur des centres d’appels a connu, au cours des vingt dernières années, un essor considérable. Cette croissance a généré une multitude d’études portant sur ces milieux de travail et, bien souvent, plusieurs d’entre elles ont emprunté la perspective de la théorie du procès de travail (*labour process theory*) pour procéder à leurs analyses. Bien que cette démarche ait permis une meilleure compréhension de la réalité des centres d’appels en mettant en relief les enjeux relatifs au contrôle et à l’intensité du travail, Russell estime que ces études sont difficilement parvenues à mettre en évidence les perceptions des agents de service au sujet des situations expérimentées dans leur travail (p. 31). Pour pallier cette lacune, il propose d’inscrire son ouvrage dans la perspective d’une analyse matérialiste élargie (*extended materialist analysis*) s’appuyant sur plusieurs approches théoriques, en l’occurrence les théories de l’organisation, le courant de la théorie critique du management et celui de la mobilisation sociale.

L’ouvrage est divisé en neuf chapitres et il s’articule autour de trois questions directrices. D’abord, comment les agents de service travaillent-ils ou quel type d’organisation du travail applique-t-on dans les centres d’appels pour produire et livrer un service informationnel intangible et instantané ? Cette première question vise à analyser la thématique relative à la division technique du travail. Ensuite, où ces agents travaillent-ils, compte tenu notamment de la délocalisation de plusieurs centres d’appels dans des pays en développement ces dernières années ? Cette interrogation cherche à mettre en évidence les paramètres liés à la division sociale du travail dans ce secteur de l’économie. Enfin, quelles